

THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN

Report of the proceedings of the 77th Annual Conference held
at the Conway Hall, London on 17th, 18th and 19th April, 1961

Friday 10.05 a.m.-1.35 p.m. 2.25 p.m.-5.15 p.m.
am Edinburgh Branch not represented
pm Collection £71.98
Edinburgh and North East Branches not represented
Literature Sold: during day £50; evening meeting £4.46

Saturday 2.05 p.m.-5 p.m.
am Edinburgh not represented
Collection £31.69½
pm Edinburgh Branch

Sunday 10.10 a.m.-1.35 p.m. 2.20 p.m.-5.30 p.m.
Edinburgh Branch not represented

1. Chairman It was agreed by the delegates that Cde B McNeoney take the
2. Late Forms C Conference was informed that Glasgow and Islington Branches had not submitted their Forms C in time in accordance with Rule 8. However, both branches had submitted a written explanation to the EC, which was then read and both branches requested permission to sit from the delegates. It was agreed by the delegates they be permitted to sit.
3. Election of Tellers It was agreed by the delegates that the Standing Orders Committee act as tellers.
4. Order of Business It was agreed to deal first with Amendments to Rules, then the Executive Committee Report plus relevant resolutions.

5. AMENDMENTS TO RULES

- 5.1 Rule 2 Glasgow Branch "On lines 2/3 delete 'the only receipt recognised being the official due stamp' and insert 'the Branch Treasurer to acknowledge receipt by signing the member's card.'" Discussion. A delegate suggested abolishing dues stamps would bankrupt weaker branches. Carried 26-13
(other amendments)
- 5.2 Rule 2 E.London Branch "On line 3 after 'the official due stamp' add the words 'this amount to be reviewed by Conference annually.'" Lost 16-25
Swansea Branch "On line 1 delete '50p' and insert '£1'." Discussion
Glasgow Branch amendment "Delete '£1' and insert '60p'." Lost 11-27
Motion Lost 9-30
All other motions and amendments were not put.
- 5.3 Rule 9 E.London Branch "On line 3 after 'per member' add the words 'subject to any change in members' dues.'" Lost 5-32
Glasgow Branch "Delete the whole rule and replace with 'The Branch Treasurer shall return to Head Office 80% of the amount collected'." Carried 30-14
It was agreed that the remaining motions fell.
- 5.4 Rule 10 Floor Motion (Lewisham Branch) "Discussion and voting be deferred until the relevant resolutions are dealt with" was Carried on a show of hands. (see section)
- 5.5 Rule 12 Glasgow Branch "On line 1 delete '14' and insert '10'." Lost 19-28
- 5.6 Rule 13 It was agreed by delegates that these motions fell as EC numbers had not been changed, therefore the quorum would not change.
- 5.7 Rule 17 Islington Branch "Delete all up to and including 'Party literature' on line 2 and replace with the words 'Executive Committee shall co-ordinate and give advice on the composition of new Party literature and shall be responsible to the Party for approving or rejecting all such literature submitted by branches for publication. The Committee shall publish any material felt to fulfill a useful propaganda role', and the rule then to continue."
Paddington Branch "On line 2 delete 'the Party literature' and insert 'all literature' issued by the Party centrally and intended for normal distribution'. On line 4 after 'debates' and before 'establish' insert 'other than those arranged by branches'." Discussion There should be collective responsibility within the Party, not an elite imposing its ideas, but the ideas of the whole Party. Another delegate could not see how the present Rule stifled and restricted members. EC member considered appointing debaters did not generally hold up the EC. A delegate said the way our present literature is distributed would be no good when we are bigger - the EC was a bottleneck. Aberdeen group had published literature which the Party generally did not agree with. The Aberdeen members had been charged and expelled. Mistakes on a local basis do not matter. Good material does go through the EC quickly, it is badly prepared material that does not. Material would be held up if the EC had a lot of work on. The delays over the Consett Leaflet were so long that the problem went away before the leaflets came. Drafts from inexperienced writers need more EC time.
Votes: Islington Motion Lost 10-37
Paddington Motion Lost 16-29

6. EC's Report and Instructed Resolutions

- 6.1 Ballots and Instructed Resolution 1
NWLondon Branch "That this Conference instruct the EC that in future elections for the Annual Ballot etc. ballot papers be sent to the individual Branch Secretaries for distribution to members."

contd ..

- Amendment E. London Branch Addendum "and the branch secretaries notify the Ballot Committee of completion of that distribution 4 weeks prior to the closing date of the ballot." There was negligible discussion the Amendment being Carried 22-20, and the Sub-resolution Carried 27-25
- 6.2 Auditors' and Treasurer's Financial Report Discussion The Party continues to spend even more money. Members were urged to make a regular donation to funds. The moneys we have may well be gone by the year end.
- 6.3 Book Department (Report by General Secretary plus a late Addendum) No discussion.
- 6.4 Branches, Membership and Organisation No discussion, but delegates agreed to deal with Branch Reports on Saturday.
- 6.5 Canteen No discussion, but delegates agreed that the committee of one be given a vote of thanks.
- 6.6 Central Literature Sales Committee If out-of-London members could get in to cover big London meetings would they inform the Head Office Assistant.
- 6.7 Central Branch A Central Branch member had submitted a circular to the EC and it had taken 8 weeks to be dealt with. Central Branch members should be able to circularise other branch members easily. There was no access to HO records when requests were made - the Gen Sec refuted this, what he felt was a serious charge, by stating that all members and outsiders are entitled to gain such access, but that HQ has not the resources to develop a filing system with instant access. At this stage Paddington Branch and Glasgow Branch Items for Discussion: Nos. 3 & 4 were taken.
- No. 3: "The right of Central Branch members to participate in the formulation of Conference and Annual Delegate Meeting Agendas."
- No. 4: "Central Branch participation in Party democracy." Discussion Very short; it was suggested Central Branch members were better serviced than others, e.g. personal copies of EC Minutes.
- 6.8 Central Organiser Reported orally that he had nothing of importance to report - not that it was a lack of co-ordination which had been the cause of no written report.
- 6.9 EC Attendances No discussion.
7. Vice Chairman It was moved and agreed that Cde H Vallar (Glasgow) take the vice-chairmanship.
- 6.10 Education Committee No discussion.
- 6.11 Education Organiser No discussion.
- 6.12 Estates Management Committee No discussion.
- 6.13 Forms A Scrutiny Committee No discussion.
- 6.14 General Secretary It was agreed to defer until the Saturday.
- 6.15 Groups' Organiser No discussion.
- 6.16 Head Office Assistant and Instructed Resolution 2
- Guildford Branch "That this Conference resolves that the Party take on a full-time, paid Head Office Organiser and that a special fund be set up to meet the cost and that dues be increased if necessary."
- Amendments
- A. Bolton Branch "Delete all after 'Head Office Organiser'."
- B. Paddington Branch "Delete at the end of resolution 'and that dues be increased if necessary.'"
- C. Glasgow Branch "Delete all after 'cost' on line 3"
- D. Islington Branch "Delete (line 1) 'take on' and insert instead 'agrees in principle to the idea of the E.C. taking on'." Discussion It was noted to have someone at HO always to answer the telephone. A HO Organiser would assist the Gen Sec, type stencils, etc., collate literature and be always available. HO Organiser would maintain file with all sorts of information and be able to ring back in minutes with a reply. In principle a paid HO Organiser is a good idea, but only when someone is available. It was a pious old sore - the paid HO Organiser - we need to be much larger to both need and support one and, as Socialists, we must be seen to pay well, at least £7,000+, and what hours per week? Do not keep with small Party philosophy - do it now. This appointment would make the Party into an employer. Our lack of progress is a result of no paid organiser. An organiser would inhibit progress. What work is not being done now? HO could not be covered sufficiently by volunteers. Organiser would need time off - evenings, weekends - with covers. Many jobs are tedious, but working together relieves the routine. Would we pay overtime? Member who had been at HO all day on a Thursday had no 'phone calls. Only need a rota organised - unwise to depend on 1 member only. There were favourable prestige and propaganda opportunities. Last year the EC rejected the telephone answer-

6.16 contd ..

ing machine - we should try again. An organiser should be there to do jobs, but to organise a team to do jobs. Our ways of doing things have their faults, but look where the others are since 1904 - nowhere! Perhaps an advertisement could go in the Socialist Standard advising when HO was open - between what hours. A special fund should be set up to pay, so that funds are not diverted from propaganda.

Votes: 2D Islington Branch E
2B and C Paddington Branch) Lost 15-33
and Glasgow Branch
2A Bolton Branch Lost 15-33
2 Guildford Branch Lost 15-33

Floor resolution (Swansea Branch) "This Conference recommends the EC to make enquiries into the feasibility of installing an Ansaphone service in HO and report to the 1981 Annual Delegate Meeting with details."

Discussion Telephone answering machines were not easy to use. People put the 'phone down as they do not like to talk to them. It could take a message or only give one. A temporary installation could be tried.

Vote: Carried 19-12

6.17 Library No discussion.6.18 Literature No discussion.6.19A Pamphlets plus Instructed Resolution 3.1 and Amendments

3.1 Birmingham Branch "That this Conference resolves in the light of the success of sales of the Marxian Economics Pamphlet by Birmingham Branch that the next pamphlet be produced on similar lines (i.e. A4 size)."

Amendments

A. Paddington Branch "In the last sentence, between the brackets, delete 'A4 Size'."

B. Glasgow Branch "Delete 'the next pamphlet' and insert, where appropriate, 'pamphlets'." Discussion A4 would be a useful format. 'With illustrations' should also have been included in the resolution. Birmingham sales were, in fact, 60.

Vote: Glasgow Branch Amendment Lost 20-22
Paddington Branch Amendment Lost 16-32
Birmingham Branch Motion Lost 22-24

6.19B Pamphlets and Instructed Resolution 3.2 and Amendments

3.2 Paddington Branch "This Conference instructs the EC to restructure the New Pamphlets committee on similar lines to the Socialist Standard Production Committee (i.e. editorial members, secretary and designer) to supervise the speedy production of topical pamphlets and leaflets, specifically designed for quick sale and distribution. The Pamphlets Committee shall be able to commission subjects, with the EC's consent, and shall have the authority to approve the text and overall presentation. Larger pamphlets intended for sale over a number of years would be referred to the EC for final approval."

Amendment Swansea Branch "Remove 'pamphlets' and 'sale and' on line 4 and remove last sentence completely." Discussion Members do resist change, but it is good for use to issue leaflets quickly on topical issues. The report on the activities of the New Pamphlets Committee had been amended by the EC in their report to this Conference. The Consett leaflet was cited as an example of the EC being a too slow means of publishing topical leaflets. We should rely on cdes putting the case, but pamphlets are important too. Gen Sec reported he did ask for special meetings for the EC to consider pamphlets, but usually the requests were turned down. Some EC members were in favour of the new format of the New Introductory Leaflet, but some considered there were basic errors - the New Pamphlets Committee had not done its job. It was considered there was a point of principle involved. There is a need to elect a broadly termed of reference committee to get on with the job rather than the present cumbersome procedure. Most EC arguments appear to be over style, not content. It was suggested that the resolution was in conflict with Rule 17, but the Chairman ruled that it was in order. Final responsibility will rest with the EC; the EC appoints the committee. The EC should delegate some of its responsibility. Even if the resolution conflicted with Rule 17 it did not matter. The New Pamphlets Committee had acted on Conference Resolution, but the EC did not. A topical leaflet is not necessarily urgent. There will be arguments within the Party over the confusion between Rule 27 and the resolution - the present resolution should be turned down and it all be dealt with properly next year. Discussions on the EC were all absurd. Each EC member must have their say, control is 'hire and fire', even the

Gen Sec has walked out in disgust at the EC. A Move by Guildford & Haringey "That the Vote be Taken" was Lost Overwhelmingly. EC is very busy and has a large amount of deferred business. The Swansea Amendment would mean the New Pamphlets Committee could only deal with topical leaflets. Anything going out in the Party name must be gone over time and again. Don't be distracted by sudden short-lived things - Rule 17 was a red herring. The EC can only appoint nominations made by branches. There was too much routine work taking precedence. No matter what a sub-committee does, it is the final responsibility of the EC. Ad hoc committees could be used to consider drafts. A Move by Islington and Swansea "That the Vote be Taken" was Agreed. The delegates agreed with the Chairman's ruling that the movers not be allowed to wind up.

Swansea Amendment Lost 7-36

Paddington Resolution Before the vote was taken the Chairman ruled that Conference Standing Orders were Suspended in order that Paddington Branch and Swansea Branch could move "The Vote be Taken" - this was Lost Overwhelmingly. A further motion by Paddington and Swansea Branches "That Paddington be allowed to wind up" was Carried Overwhelmingly by the delegates. Following Paddington Branches winding up the vote was taken and the Resolution was Carried 27-20.

6.19C Instructed Resolution

3.3 Paddington Branch and Amendments and Deferred Amendment to Rule 10

3.3 Paddington Branch "This Conference holds that branches should be encouraged to produce their own propaganda leaflets for immediate urgent distribution without first having to submit the text to the time-wasting inhibiting procedure of first obtaining EC approval. Ultimately, the EC is responsible for all Party written material, but should show flexibility in the exercise of its authority. In the opinion of this Conference it should be sufficient for a branch intending to produce a leaflet to get the approval of a member of the Socialist Standard Production Committee or Pamphlet Committee (by 'phone if necessary) providing a record of what has been printed is sent to the EC."

Amendment

Camden Branch "Delete all after the word 'leaflets' in line 2."

Swansea Branch "Remove the sentence beginning 'ultimately' on line 4 and delete everything from 'get' on line 7 to 'providing' on line 9 replace it by 'do so and ensure that'."

Islington Branch

A "Delete the word 'urgent' in line 2."

B "Delete all beginning 'ultimately' in line 4."

Rule 10 Paddington Branch "on line 4 delete the words 'advertising meetings' and replace with 'and leaflets issued by a branch'."

Amendment North East Branch Addendum to Paddington Branches Amendment - "providing that the branch supply the EC with a copy of the leaflet as soon as possible."

Discussion Sometimes mistakes do occur. Afterwards a copy should be sent to the EC to resolve all doubts. This was a vital step to expand and improve the impact of the Party - this way the Party will achieve its object within 15 years. The EC should not have authority. Each member is well informed, but should we let each publish? The EC is not perfect, but we can keep a finger on them. Party progress has not been hindered by a sub-committee being subject to recall. If all members published their own views then we would become a Party of Anarchists, democracy means recall. Aberdeen members were active, sincere, but naive and ill-informed. Some may think it exciting to expell, but it's no good. Get responsible people to check. The object of the resolution is not to remove all limitations, but to simplify procedure. What have branches to fear in putting something to the EC? The object of the resolution is for branches to use publishing as a spur to activity. The procedure should be for the branch to submit a copy after publication - then, if the EC does not like it, they should ask the branch to submit the next few before publication; but this would not give branches a free hand. Mention was made of an EC Ad hoc committee which changed a draft back to its original form after the EC had amended it. For there to be a small elite on the Party's Education work is inhibiting. Members and branches have redress to the EC. This is not so easy with branches. If passed, resolution would contravene Rule 17. The Rule Book is not perfect.

As a Point of Procedure, the Chair ruled in agreement with a delegate's suggestion that the Conference now take the Amendment to Rule also outstanding.

Vote on Amendment to Rule 10

North East Branch Amendment Carried 29-17
Sub-Resolution Lost 19-28
Floor Motion (Glasgow Branch) "That this Conference rules, in accordance with Rule 10, the Paddington Branch Resolution out of order." Lost 11-20
Vote on Resolution:

Islington Branch Amendment B Lost 11-23
Islington Branch Amendment A Lost 18-26
Swansea Branch Amendment Lost 13-33
Camden Branch Amendment Lost 12-35
Paddington Branch Resolution Lost 16-31

Floor Resolution (West London) "This Conference draws the EC's attention to the importance of considering drafts for written propaganda with greater urgency." Carried Overwhelmingly

Conference agreed to send Fraternal Greetings to all the Companion Parties and Groups abroad at the suggestion of the Gen Sec.

Conference adjourned at 5.15 on Friday.

Conference recommenced at 2.05 p.m. on Saturday.

- 6.20 Overseas Contacts Discussion It was too early for the French group to form a Party. The Socialist Party of Great Britain should not behave as if the Companion Parties were affiliated subordinates. Branches and members should place regular orders with HOAssistant for Companion Party journals.
- 6.21 Parliamentary Negligible discussion.
- 6.22 Party Funds No discussion.
- 6.23 Premises Committee No discussion.
- 6.24 Press Officer Members were advised they should try to get letters in newspapers themselves, but to send copies to HO for the Press Officer.
- 6.25A Propaganda plus Instructed Resolution 4.1
 4.1 Paddington Branch "This Conference recognising the opportunities which the Marx centenary in 1983 offers, instructs the EC to set up an ad hoc committee to plan special literature and activities for this event." Discussion At the time of the centenary all others, including the press and broadcasting will have special features and we cannot afford to be left out - both a pamphlet and a leaflet would be needed. Why copy others? A delegate dislikes the term 'Marxism'. A critical and explanatory work on Marx (including his mistakes) should be published. Should not exploit nor glorify Marx, but only put the record straight. Special Socialist Standard issues do not stimulate writers and members, but don't go overboard - use it, but don't go mad. We need to reply to the distorters of Marx.
Vote Carried 31-13
- 6.25B Item for Discussion 1 (North East Branch) "Should the Party obtain a caravan for propaganda purposes?" Discussion A caravan would put the Party's name around. Too expensive: £2,500 for a minimum good secondhand one. Better to pay expenses. No resolution.
- 6.25C Propaganda - Prototype £50 Platform Was viewed, demonstrated and discussed by delegates, who generally thought it to be an excellent design. No resolution.
- 6.25D Propaganda - Form E Discussion This gave a report of branch activities and the Master Form E could be used in place of branch reports. The committee said they would welcome the fuller information. The Propaganda Committee report was not an adequate replacement of oral reports. Propaganda should be based on the branch. The Propaganda Committee reported they received very few Forms E from branches.
- 6.26 Publicity No discussion.
- 6.27 Propaganda Information Bank No discussion.
- 6.28 Review Journals No discussion.
- 6.29 Socialist Standard Production Committee The delegates agreed to defer consideration of the committee's work until Sunday.
- 6.29A SSPC - Instructed Resolution 5.3 plus Islington Branch Amendment 5.3 Paddington Branch "That in view of the many interesting discussions now proceeding in the Party, this Conference urges the EC to give serious consideration to the publication of an occasional discussion journal to absorb material which is not necessarily suitable for the SS." Amendment Islington Branch "Delete the word 'urges' in line 2, insert instead 'instructs'." Discussion It was needed. We should not advertise disputes. It would not divert attention from the SS. It would explain difficult theoretical ideas. Party needs debate. Why were members so keen to write. Could they not find anyone at their branch to discuss

6.29A contd..

matters? This journal would create more problems than it would solve. We need more active discussion. There is a surplus of SS material available, but the journal would be nothing like Forum. Surplus SS material was not intended for this journal - very different. It would end up like Forum. New members who have gone beyond the SS would go to the original books, not this journal. If a member has something to say, the cde is able to circularise members. The proposition has 3 good uses: 1. To clarify theories; 2. Republication of Archives and 3. A correspondence column for where Conference discussion is inadequate. Forum has become distorted. 90% of it was very good. We should talk to each other in frank terms. But the journal must be edited - we should become real dialectical materialists and not be afraid of theoretical development. We should also study in depth our possible future too, though, of course, we should not say how a Socialist society should be run (the danger of appearing to be leaders), but talk about what a model society could be like.

Vote Islington Branch Amendment Lost 28-27

Paddington Branch 5.3 Lost 19-29

6.30 SS Subscribers No discussion.

6.31 Standing Orders No discussion.

6.32 Tapes Discussion They reported 2/3 enquiries were received per week and branches were invited to order more. Tapes were important and branch discussions should be recorded in order they may be transcribed into writing.

6.33 Ad Hoc Committee on Party Literature Delegates agreed to defer until Sunday.

8. Swansea Branch Instructed Resolution 5.4

5.4 Swansea Branch "This Conference considers that the description of the Socialist Standard as 'Official Journal of the Socialist Party of Great Britain' appearing on the front page of the SS and elsewhere in Party publications and publicity be changed to 'Monthly Journal of the Socialist Party of Great Britain.'"

Amendment

A Haringey Branch "In line 4 delete 'The Socialist Party' and insert 'THE SOCIALIST PARTY' i.e. the title of the Party to appear as 'THE SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain!'"

B Islington Branch "Insert after 'The Socialist Party of Great Britain', 'and the World Socialist Party of Ireland' (lines 2 & 3) and also insert after 'Socialist Party of Great Britain' 'and the World Socialist Party of Ireland'." (last line). Discussion There was no desire to cease collaborating with the Irish Party on the SS. The charge would be a toning down in the importance of the SS. Styles do change as time goes on - even the word 'official'.

Vote Islington Amendment Carried 26-20 It was agreed by delegates

the Haringey Branch Amendment fell.

The Sub-Resolution was Lost 20-26.

9. Branch Reports These commenced on Saturday, during which the Conference adjourned at 5 p.m., and recommenced Sunday at 10.10 a.m. Almost every branch present reported increased activities and membership, though Glasgow reported problems getting meetings - including physical attacks by supporters of both sides on the Irish question, with very bad weather hampering outdoor activities. Some groups also gave reports.

10. Instructed Resolutions and EC Report (continued)

10.1 SSPC and Instructed Resolution 5.1

5.1 Islington Branch "This Conference rejects the 77th EC's acceptance of Cde J D'Arcy's complaint against the following passage in the May SS: 'The object of capitalist production is profit, but profits are not what many people imagine them to be; they are not the result of capitalists selling commodities at a price which is higher than their value. On the contrary, commodities generally sell at around their value, but profits are still made'. This Conference endorses the theoretical correctness of this statement and stands by Marx's contention that 'to explain ... the general nature of profits, you must start from the theorem that, on average commodities are sold at their real value, and that profits are derived from selling them at their values, that is, in proportion to the quantity of labour realised in them. If you cannot explain profit upon this supposition you cannot explain it at all.' Value, Price & Profit" More than 1 delegate either read from or referred to prepared speeches or circulars - no copies of which had been made available to the Gen Sec for reference, therefore this report of a complex, but interesting discussion will contain gaps for which the secretariat must apologise.

- 10.1 contd ..
Discussion Need for open debate - someone had their sums wrong. Had the contents of Value, Price and Profit been considered. By the Camden circular there would even be no class struggle. Value is not equivalent to price. How important is this issue to the Party propaganda? EC have no idea and try to find a way round it. Say clearly where the article is wrong, if it is - have to speculate on circular. Article does make reference to Marx's fuller works. There are always exceptions to the general case. Most members are not competent to argue this matter - doubt if 130 delegates could resolve it. Try getting up at Hyde Park to see the effect of discussing it. Every science suffers from simplification. EC should have passed the buck to Conference, but they would have confused it even more. Perhaps too much has been made of what was meant to be a simple discussion.

Vote Carried 26-13

10.1B NWLondon Branch Instructed Resolution 5.2

5.2 NWLondon Branch "In view of the numerous lengthy discussions on the EC arising out of theoretical articles in the SS, this Conference instructs the EC to set up a consultative committee to whom the SSPC might refer before publication."

Amendments

Paddington Branch "Delete all after 'to whom' and add 'the EC, can refer such questions!'"

Islington Branch "Delete (line 2) 'instructs ...' insert instead 'expresses its confidence in the present SS.'" Discussion Too much time wasted in the Party dealing with controversy and not propaganda. EC should resolve openly and properly - personalities should be avoided. If the editors are unable to comply they should resign. There has been a constant unfair barrage of criticism towards the present SSPC. Correspondence to the SSPC can get lost in the post. Criticisms need not be negative - SSPC are competent to resolve matters and do not need a special committee. All that happened was a member complained to the EC and not the SSPC. EC needs help - not the SSPC. The principle is not new - editors always have referred to others. Some members have wrong ideas in their heads.

Vote Islington Branch Amendment Lost 17-23

Paddington Branch Amendment Lost 6-43

NWLondon Branch Motion Lost 8-41

- 10.1C SSPC General Discussion A need for accurate sales figures of the SS was voiced. This could be done by a special form for branches to fill in. Invoices only give outward figures. Covers have been the best aid, or hindrance, in selling the SS, but SS still has masses of small print - language too complex - articles too long. Do not want 2 pages on the Royal Family. Members who wished to complain to the SSPC were asked to submit 3 copies (for the 3 editorial members). Lay-out of the SS is always guided by Party members' opinions.

- 10.2 Ad Hoc Committee on Party literature (interim report) Discussion Short and of a critical nature.

- 10.3 General Secretary No discussion.

- 10.4 MOTION to ADOPT EC's Report to Conference, General Secretary's Report and Late Reports, including the Master Form C was Agreed by delegates.

11. INSTRUCTED RESOLUTIONS

Policy 6.1 Islington Branch "This Conference repudiates the view that capitalism is not yet ripe for Socialism. Conference acknowledges that material conditions now make Socialism a practical possibility, but the lack of class consciousness on the part of most workers stands in the way of the urgently need Socialist revolution. Conference deplores the view that Socialism must be discussed as if it is only likely to come about in the distant future. Whilst recognising that the revolutionary party is not the sole stimulus to working class political consciousness the Socialist Party of Great Britain maintains that it, together with its Companion Parties throughout the world, must be more vigorous than ever before in confronting the international working class with the clear choice between world Socialism or world barbarism."

Amendments

West London Branch "In the final sentence delete 'world barbarism' and replace with 'world capitalism'."

NWLondon Branch, Paddington Branch and Glasgow Branch all sent in identical amendments. Discussion A greater sense of urgency is required - we must not regard Socialism as in the unattainable future. Need for consistency in our case. We should get down to plans as to how we would use present

contd ..

technology. Want to develop the Party Case - phrase 'World Barbarism' would help. Barbarism to a Socialist means quite a happy time. A curate's egg of a resolution. No future in Capitalism for the working class - Socialism is the working class only interest. Because a member knows he will not see Socialism, it does not mean he, therefore, lacks enthusiasm only in the numerical sense do we have a long way to go. Astonishment at the depth of knowledge members have of Capitalism, but not of Socialism and of how it would work. Members should think big.

Vote: W. London Branch Amendment Carried 39-7
Paddington Branch Sub-Resolution Lost 33-5

Adjournment: 1.35 to 2.20 p.m.

11.2 INSTRUCTED RESOLUTION

6.2 Policy

6.2 Paddington Branch: "This Conference sympathises with those in the Party who want to improve the wording of the Object and Declaration of Principles by clarifying possible theoretical ambiguities, by modifying outmoded rhetoric, and by modernising the language, but considers that, as the text has become an historic document of the Socialist movement, untouched for 80 years, it should not now be tampered with. Further, this Conference considers that as the wording of the Declaration of Principles could not have anticipated important development in the Party's case since 1904, and because a literal interpretation of the text can cause misunderstanding, the Party to-day requires a freshly drawn up statement which will adequately express its basic position, acceptance of which would be the minimum requirement for Party membership. To this end the EC is instructed to set up a committee to prepare a draft statement of the Party's basic propositions, of not more than 500 words, in good clear English. The committee should fully consult branches, individual members and Companion Parties; a provisional draft should be submitted to branches and members within one year, for discussion and suggested amendments. The final draft should be placed on the Agenda of the 1983 Annual Conference for possible amendment and final decision." Discussion Do support the Declaration of Principles, but the Party's horizons have widened since 1904 - nothing outrageous was intended in the resolution. 'Hostile' is ambiguous - it implies aggression and not a reasoned case. Prefer 'totally opposed'. Non-pacifist attitude contained in 'Wage war': it needs to be replaced by 'expose' - no other Party can reason without exposing themselves too.

At this stage the Delegates Agreed to include Item for Discussion 9.

9. Swansea Branch: "Party polls to decide whether members are satisfied with the Declaration of Principles in its present form and whether members want to change the Party name to the World Socialist Party of Great Britain."

Discussion Delegate expressed that he was hostile and wanted to make war against those who employed him - wanted to make it more aggressive. Delegates should not attach too much importance to this issue, but they should not belittle words. There is an order to evolution - more advanced do show the way to the backward. The founders of the Party would not object to our reconsidering the D of P if it was found to be a stumbling block. Do not want yet another committee. A branch declared it would wage war on those wishing to change the D of P. Specific references to religion, reformism within the D of P are not needed - they would lead to a long, turgid document - all members agree with the D of P, why draw up something we will all disagree with. No one joins on just reading the D of P: they study the Party Case before joining. At the first meeting of the Party there was only one proposed amendment to the D of P - to change the word War to Hostile - this was lost overwhelmingly. People who would rather not join use the present D of P as an excuse. If people go away we can never know why not. D of P has stood the test of time. Do not wish to be confused with people who want to fight on the streets. The D of P deals with the primary effects of Capitalism - wages and reforms are secondary. Will the new version be used with or instead of the old D of P? Must include our attitudes to War, Russian and World Socialism.

Floor Resolution (Paddington Branch) "The Vote be taken." Carried Overwhelmingly.

Vote: Paddington Branch Resolution Lost 18-25

Floor Resolution (Swansea Branch) "This Conference recommends the EC to hold a Party Poll to decide whether members are satisfied with the D of P in its present form and whether members want to change the Party name to the World Socialist Party."

Floor Resolution (Glasgow Branch) "The Vote be Taken." Carried Over-
whelmingly.

Vote: Lost 11-24

12. Fraternal Greetings were received from World Socialist Party of United States of America. The delegates agreed to note this.

13. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

- 13.1 3. Paddington Branch "The right of Central Branch members to participate in the formulation of Conference and Annual Delegate Meeting Agendas."

4. Glasgow Branch "Central Branch participation in Party democracy."
Discussion HO and LC facilities should be open to all members. It took 2 months to get a circular to branches. Central Branch members have not got the political strength to put anything to Conference and ADM. The proposal would not be an extension of democracy, but would be a restriction of it - but worth looking at. A question was asked on the mechanics of Central Branch voting at Conference - why, if they were the largest branch (over 160), did they not have 16 votes instead of 2/3 called out by the Central Branch secretaries? Delegates were informed the long-established practice had been to establish voting strength on a vote at Conference per 10 Ballot papers returned, i.e. despite the branch being over 160 members, only 20/36 returned their Ballot Papers. Therefore, Central Branch had 2 votes this Conference.

Floor Resolution (Paddington Branch) "This Conference recommends the EC to instruct the Central Branch Secretaries to investigate the possibility of setting up a mechanism to better involve Central Branch members in Party democracy." Carried Overwhelmingly

13.2 Item for Discussion

6. Glasgow Branch: "Is membership of the armed forces and the police compatible with membership of the Party?" As a Socialist in the armed forces it would be quite likely the member would be given orders incompatible with their views as a Socialist, i.e. strike breaking. Capitalists are allowed to be members. Is the Party afraid of being infiltrated. Only armed forces and police would do anything directly against the working class. Previous ruling was in 1961, when conscription was still an issue - if a member joined voluntarily, then that in now way could be tolerated. Members had done their best during wartime to avoid conscription - many went on the run. Members were warned against advising members of the armed forces to go on the run - this is regarded as a serious crime. 'Seducing a member of the armed forces.' All workers are involved to some degree in the wage system, but all - except armed forces and police - have a degree of choice. Towards the Socialist revolution the armed forces will contain Socialists and we should take this into consideration.

13.3 Final Item for Discussion

10. Islington Branch: "This Conference recommends the EC to allow branches and members to sell copies of the Socialist Party of Canada pamphlet - Lenin Distorts Marx - the the public." Discussion EC had acted incorrectly over this .. SPC is not an affiliated Party of the SPGB.

Vote: Carried 25-5

Conference adjourned at 5.30 p.m.

General Secretary